

Painted Hives

YA Discussion Questions

1. Do you think *Painted Hives* is a believable story? Why or why not? Are parts of it believable?
2. Why did Wilber make the choice he made at the end of the story? Was this the right choice? What do you think will happen next?
3. What does Wilber learn about the world and about himself in his travels? How have you learned from travel?
4. Wilber takes a leap in going to Slovenia, a place he knew nothing about and had no connection to. What country or countries would you like to travel to? What would you like to learn about while you are there?
5. Slovenia is described as a “magical place” more than once in the book. What do you think of when you picture a “magical place”? What are “magical places” that you have experienced?
6. Throughout the story, Wilber is unable to see what is right in front of him and seems stuck following the path he thinks he is supposed to be on. Why do you think it is difficult for people to see what is right in front of them? What is the danger of getting “stuck on a path”?
7. Why do you think the author incorporates bees into the story? What did Wilber learn from his beekeeping experience? What did you learn about bees from reading *Painted Hives*?
8. Dr. Bob, Mr. Pulijn, and Lailith could all be described as mentors in some way to Wilber. What did he learn from each of them? Who are mentors in your life and what have you learned from them?
9. How is Nina different from Wilber? Why do they get along so well? What do you think Wilber learns from her?
10. How would you describe an “Aha! moment”? What “Aha! moments” have you had in your life?
11. Why do you think the author chose “Painted Hives” as the title of the book? What is the significance of painted beehive panels and how does that represent what Wilber learns along his journey?

12. What is the meaning of the first kiss? Why do you think the author dedicates several pages to it?
13. Wilber often finds himself in situations where he is outside of his comfort zone and needs to ask strangers for help. What are some times in your life where you have needed to ask a stranger for help? What is difficult about initiating a conversation with a stranger?
14. How would the ending of the story have changed if Wilber had missed the ferry or if Mr. Beno hadn't come along after the car broke down? Do you think Wilber would have come to the same realization? How do you think the story should have ended?
15. How would you describe Wilber's personality? What aspects of Wilber's personality do you see in yourself?
16. What are the "signatures" or dominant traits of the other main characters in the book? Why are these important? In what ways can you relate to these characters?
17. How would you describe the other elements of the story (in addition to Character): Plot, Setting, Conflict, Theme?
18. What are some of your favorite bee puns from the book? Why are puns an effective means of humor?
19. Toward the end of the book, Wilber says his dad does not like technology because it draws people apart. In what ways do you think this is true? In what ways does technology help to bring people together?
20. What is the significance of recurring dreams? What are some recurring dreams you have had? What do you think they mean?